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President's Corner



Joyce Frericks

Strategic Planning

The road map to success

I have been blessed to have great people in my life.

In July, I wrote about my dad being a great man and how I wanted to be like him. In business, I was also blessed with a great mentor. Dave Simpkins hired me a long time ago and saw things in me that I didn't see. Some (truthfully most) of that potential he dragged out of me kicking and screaming.

Early in 2007, Dave stopped in my office and said "You're going to buy into the Herald with me." My response, "No, I'm not." You see, my husband and I had four kids, and we already had a business in town. The kids were in sports, I did the bookkeeping for my husband's business, and I just didn't think I could add one more thing. I'm pretty sure he told me to think about it and he'd get me numbers. I'm not even sure he heard my reply.

It didn't take long for Dave to convince me to come up with the down payment, and along with another employee, we became partners. Shortly after our partnership started, Dave talked about purchasing neighboring newspapers. Again, I went into this idea kicking and screaming. We were not going to buy more papers. Eventually, we merged two separate partnerships that Dave was in to form Star Publications, and we did buy those papers. And then, a couple more.

One of the most important things Dave taught me was to make a plan and budget for it. Dave was a forward-thinking man. He was one of the first to publish a newspaper in Minnesota with a computer. When the local telephone company wouldn't invest in internet in our small town, he took out a loan, bought the equipment and trained someone how to run it. We became the first public internet provider in our town.

Dave passed away in February 2018. Our last discussion was about budgeting. We ran A LOT of budgets. I admit I wasn't always the most willing participant in these planning and budgeting sessions. They were time consuming and always ended up with more work for me. I didn't realize what Dave knew very well — strategic planning and budgeting are pivotal to success. Some of his ideas were not feasible, but we were spared from imminent failure by budgeting them before plunging in. Many other ideas made us who we are today.

MFCP meets for a strategic planning session once a year. We discuss where we are, where we want to be and how we're going to accomplish that. We review each committee's accomplishments for the year and set our goals for the next. We also try to figure out what our member's priorities are and what member benefits are most important to continue.

This is where you come into play. We would like to hear from you on how to make MFCP even better than it already is.

MFCP member benefits include a free readership audit, ad networks, training, conferences, awards and more. Do you have ideas for other benefits? Do you have ideas to increase revenue? If so, please email them to Lee at director@mfc.org or myself at joyce@saukherald.com

Like Dave's ideas, some of them are sure to be great and lead us into the future.

Joyce

From the office



MFCP Keeps You in the Loop

Online programmatic ad sales program, using AI in your business, and Postal form 3602 changes ahead..... it is all here!

In her President's article Joyce talks about the importance of planning to be able to effectively move ahead. I certainly agree with her sentiments and I'm proud of the amount of planning your board of directors expends making sure we're offering you strong, viable, and timely content.

Last month I wrote about the need to keep learning – and, thereby, growing. We kicked off the month by offering several quality training sessions to help you do just that. Perhaps the most important training we conducted focused on the ins and outs of selling digital advertising.

MFCP has a new online programmatic ad sales program that allows its members to create and place programmatic advertising with ease. It's an easy-to-use system that puts you in control. Perhaps best of all is that selling members earn 40% on all ad sales. If you or your team would like to learn more about this opportunity, please reach out to me. We'll schedule a Zoom training (it takes about an hour) and get you up to speed and headed in the right direction.

We've also scheduled a Publishers' Roundtable about Artificial Intelligence and how to use it in your business. We held a roundtable in August on the same topic – but that was a 100,000-foot overview. This session will be hosted by me and will feature a panel of MFCP members that are using AI in their business. This will be a true roundtable so come prepared with questions. The roundtable will be held on Tuesday, September 19th at 1PM via Zoom. [Click here for the Zoom link.](#)

Do you mail your publication? And, if so, are you completing your form 3602 by hand? As of December 31st, all forms must be submitted online. I know the postal system can seem overwhelming and often times the local post office isn't much help. Fortunately, MFCP is here to help you through the postal maze and make sure you are in compliance. But, let's not wait until the last minute! Reach out today and let's get started!

Have a great month. And, I hope to see you on the Publisher Roundtable call September 19th.

Lee

Members Helping Members

You Ask...We Will Find the Answer!

Of the many benefits that come with your MFCP membership perhaps one of the most overlooked is the ability to reach out for answers to questions utilizing “Members Helping Members”.

We’re happy to report that we have fielded more inquiries this past year than ever before with a variety of questions.

Here’s how it works:

If it’s something we know the answer to, we immediately supply it.

If we don’t know the answer but we know who does – then we provide the contact info and make that connection.

When we’re stumped and don’t have a referral to share, we immediately send an eblast to query the membership for an answer.

Some of the questions we’ve blasted out in the past year include:

- Recommendations for a web printer
- Advice about offering maternity leave as a benefit.
- Contact info for Tractor Supply Co.
- Information about a Christmas promotion that presented at conference years ago
- Advice on how to price a quarter page when switching from a 6-column to a 7-column format
- Recommendations for circulation software
- Contact info for US Cellular

What questions can we help get answered for you? Email me at director@mfc.org and we’ll go to work for you!!

It’s been a busy month for MFCP and all of you.



Always Continue Learning

By Taylor Smith,
Graphic Designer, Fillmore County Journal

In today's competitive job market, staying up-to-date with the latest industry trends and advancements is crucial for career progression. Learning new concepts and techniques improves our critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It enables us to approach challenges from different perspectives and find innovative solutions. Learning fosters personal growth by encouraging curiosity, creativity, and self-awareness. It helps us develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us, leading to self-improvement and a more fulfilling life.

Now that you understand the significance of lifelong learning, let's discuss some strategies I have used to make a habit of continuous education. With the use of online learning platforms, mobile apps, and educational websites, learning has become more accessible than ever before. Take advantage of these resources to explore new subjects, attend webinars, or enroll in online courses. To explain further, while attending college I enrolled in a course called Interpersonal Communications. This course taught me that effective communication acts as a catalyst for enhanced productivity and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, effective communication allows me to boost personal motivation by verbalizing my roles and tasks to colleagues to ensure overall success as a team. It also taught me to embrace challenges and not fear failure. Mistakes are stepping stones to growth and serve as valuable learning experiences.

Furthermore, learning platforms like LinkedIn allow me to freely research topics I may be struggling with or stay up to date with current trends. This, as mentioned previously, allows me to tap into my curiosity and creativity, adapt to a rapidly evolving world, and expand my knowledge, enabling me to advance in my career.

Remember, the journey of continuous learning is an exciting and fulfilling one, so let's embark on this lifelong adventure together!

Taylor

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Kevin Slimp



Making Space for the Important Stuff

Simple changes invite readers to pick up your paper

Younger readers might not know what I'm writing about when I mention Facebook "memories." Still, most of you are familiar with those daily reminders that pop up each morning to remind you of what you were doing one, two, or even ten years ago. Not long ago, a memory on Facebook reminded me of a post I'd created in 2014: "Over the next three weeks, I'll be speaking in Minneapolis MN, Sioux Falls SD, Edmonton AB, Syracuse NY, and Phoenix AZ."

It's hard to imagine I used to spend that much time on the road. It seems like a different lifetime. Don't get me wrong. I still speak at conventions occasionally, but not nearly as frequently as I did a few years ago. These days, I spend as much time redesigning newspapers as anything else. I'm learning that the more papers I redesign, the better I get at finding ways to make the pages draw readers without sacrificing content.

Clients often express concern about losing content at the beginning of the redesign process. One universal goal of redesigns seems to be to get as much text on the pages without increasing page count. Whenever I redesign a paper, I do something to reassure the client. I create an entire issue of the newly designed newspaper using the content from a recent issue.

I'm thrilled to show the publisher, editors, and others on staff the issue with bigger headlines, bigger photos, and easier-to-read text. For a moment, I feel like a magician. Unlike any magician you've seen, I will share a few of my "tricks" with you.

Headlines

Use bigger fonts with fewer words. Instead of "Central High School beats Austin-East to end 6-year losing streak," I might use "Central ends streak!" in a big, bold font. Underneath, I might include a light subhead (generally in sans serif) describing the headline. I often use the original headline for the subhead:

Bobcats end streak!

Central High School beats Austin-East to end 6-year losing streak

The new headline (and subhead) often takes up no more room than the original headline yet appears to fill more space.

Photos

Since the pandemic, I've noticed in-person training has become a rarity. I lead a lot of webinars, yet I miss being in person with students. With less training, younger designers often haven't learned the basic rules many of us learned long ago. One of these is the "shoulder rule."

The shoulder rule goes like this: Most photos should be cropped to the shoulders. Cropping is one method I use to create more space for bigger headlines and more white space. It's interesting how a cropped photo might take up less room on the page but appear larger. I often take photos of basketball players shooting a layup surrounded by other players, referees, and empty space and crop it to just the shooter's upper body, tossing the ball with his outstretched arm toward the basket. I've heard the response, "That looks much better," more times than I remember after cropping a photo like this.

Nameplate/Flag

My first step in redesigning any newspaper is creating a new flag for the front page. I often spend several days building the new nameplate. A newspaper's flag is crucial. It either invites someone to look closer at the page or screams at them to throw the paper down.

Interestingly, many nameplates are much larger than they need to be. I think part of the reason for this is that many flags were first designed when bulkier fonts were in style. Newspapers often used multiple lines with "The," "Press," and "Chronicle" stacked.

In 2023, clean is in. By placing the flag on one line stretching across the width of the page, the reader is invited to look closer. Updating the flag makes the page more inviting by offering a cleaner, more dignified look.

The Rest of My Secrets

I could go on at the risk of sharing all of my secrets. I'm nearing the end of my allotted space, however, and this should give you and your staff enough material to make some simple yet noticeable improvements to your paper's design right away.

Kevin Slimp has been a popular consultant and speaker in the newspaper industry since developing the PDF remote printing method in 1994. His upcoming webinars on design, circulation, and software can be found at newspaperacademy.com.

Kevin Slimp is former director of The University of Tennessee Newspaper Institute and founder of NewspaperAcademy.com.

Ad-Libs



Do You Know Where Your Fire Extinguishers Are?

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

We all want to take care of our advertisers and coworkers. Well, there's no better way to do that than to help them stay safe in the workplace. There are some simple things we can do to accomplish this.

Some years ago, I attended a series of meetings at a large company which had a number of offices in the area. In each of the meetings – whether attended by 10 people or 50 people – someone opened the meeting with a brief safety announcement. Typically, he or she pointed out the fire alarm locations, how to exit the building if the alarm sounded, where to assemble in the parking lot for instructions, etc. Everyone took the information seriously, and it was easy to see that employees were accustomed to starting their meetings that way.

I remember thinking that it was an impressive way to begin any kind of get-together. After all, in a sizable meeting room, most employees may not be as familiar with those details as they would be in their individual work areas. And visitors like me may have never been to that building before. As a result of those brief presentations, everyone felt safer and more confident. I know I did.

This list can be a good place to start:

- 1. Designate a safety officer.** This person will open meetings or prepare someone else to open meetings. The officer should check all safety equipment, alarms and door locks, then prepare a standard script to be read before each gathering. Better yet, designate a safety team, perhaps with representatives from several departments. Give them the authority to interrupt any meeting or conversation for any safety reason they see fit.
- 2. Keep all alarms and sprinklers up-to-date.**
- 3. Post exit diagrams around the building.** Clearly mark “you are here.”
- 4. Place fire extinguishers in appropriate places.** Let everyone know their locations. Keep them updated and learn how to use them.
- 5. Call in the experts.** This is too important to handle in casual discussions. Invite police officers and fire department officials to do walk-throughs and make recommendations. In a sad commentary on today's world, ask them to map a plan for what to do if an armed person is in the building.

6. Safety meetings. Safety and inspection requirements inevitably vary from area to area. In addition to the standard meeting announcements mentioned here, it's important to keep these issues top-of-mind with employees. In view of our specialization in advertising, we all know the importance of repetition in the business of marketing communication. Safety messages should be repeated enough for everyone in the building to have them memorized.

7. Make a copy of this list – or find a better one. Offer it to your advertisers, vendors, friends and family members.

The slogan “Safety is Job Number One” applies to every industry, not just those that involve dangerous equipment, technology and materials. And it applies to everyone along the way, from front-line team members to road warriors to the corporate offices.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com

Ryan Dohrn



How to Help Your Sales Reps Meet Their Goals

This month Ryan discusses ways to help sales reps meet their goals. Check it all out in the link below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Irz_qHC425g

Listen to Ryan's ad sales podcast, [Ad Sales Nation](#), on [iTunes](#) or on [Soundcloud](#). Keep up to date with Ryan's ad sales training advice on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RyanDohrnLIVE>

Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning [ad sales training coach](#), a nationally recognized [internet sales consultant](#), and an international [motivational speaker](#). He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, [Selling Backwards](#). Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique [ad sales training](#) and [sales coaching](#) firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of [Sales Training World](#).